REMARKS

Claims 1-13 and 21 are pending. Non-elected claims 14-20 are canceled, claims 1 and 11 are amended and new claim 21 is added.

A marked-up version showing the changes to claims 1 and 11 made by the present amendment is attached hereto as "**VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE.**"

Claims 1-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by ***Mizuhara et al.*** "and /or" ***Watanabe et al.*** Favorable reconsideration of this rejection is earnestly solicited.

Claim 1 has been amended to specify forming a trench in the first insulation layer, and embedding and forming a first conductive layer in the trench. The cited references do not teach or suggest this feature.

Although the Office Action does not repeat the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, as set forth in the prior Office Action, the Examiner comments at the top of page 4 of the Office Action that the term "third mask" in the claim may not be used unless first and second masks are previously recited. As such, claim 11 has been amended.

For at least the foregoing reasons, the claimed invention distinguishes over the cited art and defines patentable subject matter. Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action by applicants would be desirable to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned attorney.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

ARMSTRONG, WESTERMAN, HATTORI,
McLELAND & NAUGHTON, LLP

Stephen G. Adrian
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 32,878

Attachment: Version with markings to show changes made

Atty. Docket No.990559
1725 K Street, N.W., Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20006
Tel: (202) 659-2930
Fax: (202) 887-0357
SGA/arf

RECEIVED
SEP - 6 2001
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2800

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1 and 11 have been amended as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A fabrication method of a semiconductor device comprising the steps of:

forming a first insulation layer over a substrate,

introducing impurities into said first insulation layer,

forming a trench in said first insulation layer, and

embedding and forming a first conductive layer in said ~~first insulation layer~~ trench.

8 11. (Amended) The fabrication method of a semiconductor device according to claim 2, further comprising, after formation of said second insulation layer and before formation of said contact hole, the steps of:

forming a ~~third~~ mask pattern on said second insulation layer,

etching said second insulation layer using said ~~third~~ mask pattern to selectively reduce thickness of said second insulation layer, and

forming ~~a fourth~~ another mask pattern on said second insulation layer so as to expose a portion of the region reduced in thickness,

wherein said step of forming a contact hole includes the step of etching said second insulation layer using said ~~fourth~~ another mask pattern, and

said step of forming a second conductive layer includes the step of forming a third conductive layer on said region reduced in thickness, electrically connected to said second conductive layer, in addition to formation of said second conductive layer.